

SUMMARY REPORT ARTS EDUCATION CONGRESS

November 5, 1998

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Arts Education Congress convened on November 5, 1998 by the Heinz Endowments and The Grable Foundation was to discuss and formulate a strategic joint action agenda to advance arts education in Allegheny County and define a structure to carry this agenda forward. Participants assessed this assembly as “outstanding,” “remarkable,” “excellent,” and even a “landmark” event. The diversity of stakeholders represented and the deliberative, participatory design of the day were highly appreciated. Participants valued the opportunity to hear other stakeholder perspectives and to have the opportunity to be heard beyond their own peer group. Following are specific outcomes of the day:

The Congress established a prioritized joint action agenda to advance arts education in Allegheny County.

Inspired and motivated by the capacity turn-out and by the caliber of deliberations, 285 representatives of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County school districts, cultural organizations and artists, professional associations and community organizations, and funders identified the following three areas as the top priorities for joint action:

- ***Professional Development*** - By far, the highest priority is to establish coordinated professional development for teachers, arts specialists, administrators, and cultural organizations and artists. This issue was top ranked among superintendents, principals, school boards, artists and cultural organizations, and university, community and professional groups, and ranked second among teachers and curriculum specialists.
- ***Development of State Standards*** - The second ranked action is to accelerate education and advocacy efforts to the State Board of Education and other stakeholders regarding the value of sequential, standards-based arts education and the development of state standards for arts education. Although state standards for the arts proved to be a highly debated topic, many participants view their development as a priority first step because their establishment would greatly assist arts educators in promoting the importance of instruction in and through the arts, and encourage schools to take arts education more seriously. Allegheny County stakeholders' action will require a strategic approach in order to establish a strong voice on this issue.
- ***Public Relations*** - Participants' third ranked action is to implement ongoing public relations to give public visibility to arts education policy, activities, issues, and impact.

Public relations emerged as a key strategy to educate and change misperceptions about the value of arts education. Participants expressed serious concern about the pervasive lack of awareness, understanding, and counterproductive attitudes that pose obstacles to advancing arts education.

Participants' overwhelming response in these areas emphasizes the critical need to establish a firm foundation for arts education based in intrinsic beliefs in the value of arts education, in the power of mandated change, and in the training of stakeholders skilled in effectively implementing arts in schools.

In addition to these three actions, the idea of an information clearinghouse received notable support by certain stakeholder groups. Many participants see that all actions could be enhanced by a clearinghouse that is an active resource serving all stakeholders' needs.

The Congress affirmed the importance of establishing a regional coordinating entity to advance these actions.

Most stakeholder groups defined how to ensure appropriate representation of their members' interests in future decision-making (see main report). Teachers and cultural organizations/artists, in particular, determined the need to convene again in their respective stakeholder groups in order to further discuss appropriate representation.

Congress participants discussed the nature of a coordinating entity that could effectively carry forward a joint action agenda on a regional basis. That this entity be able to maintain its own identity and decision making was of paramount concern. There was tolerance for the proposal that such an entity be housed *temporarily* within another organization, but many advocated for an independent entity. In the course of deliberation, participants articulated criteria for determining an institutional base for a regional coordinating entity, including:

- Credibility and compatibility of goals in the eyes of both the education and cultural sectors;
- Neutrality, neither exerting its own institutional agenda nor biased toward particular stakeholder interests;
- Respect for maintaining the regional coordinating entity's own distinct identity and decision making power;
- Provision of useful connections, resources, knowledge, expertise to advance arts education goals;
- Infrastructure support with minimal bureaucracy imposed; reasonable overhead costs;
- Capacity for regional reach and operation; and
- Accessibility of location, either centrally located or mobile.

There was no clear commonly held sentiment about whether a regional coordinating entity would be best located in the cultural, K-12 education, or college/university sectors. The Heinz Endowments and Grable Foundation expressed a commitment of resources to help establish the regional coordinating entity, including support for a staff person.

The Congress elicited a high degree of enthusiasm and willingness to be involved in advancing arts education.

The Congress stimulated enthusiasm, established high expectations, and elicited a high level of commitment among participants to sustain momentum and become personally involved. A combined 85% to 98% of participants expressed "high" or "moderately high" expectations that the Congress will have an impact on advancing arts education. Expectations for impact were higher at the regional and school/ organization levels than at the school district level. Superintendents, principals, and administrators had the highest expectations for change based on the day, including "high" expectations (61%) for district level change, whereas other stakeholders were more moderately optimistic of district impact.

The Congress elicited an impressive response from participants to serve on task forces to move forward priority actions. One hundred and nine individuals (38%) want to be actively involved in future efforts to advance arts education in the region.

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BACKGROUND ON THE CONGRESS

Purpose of the Congress

On November 5, 1998, the Arts Education Congress was convened by the Heinz Endowments and The Grable Foundation. The purpose of the Congress was to discuss and formulate a strategic joint action agenda to advance arts education in Allegheny County and define a structure to carry this agenda forward. The long-term goal related to efforts evolving from the Congress is to help all students in the county learn about the arts and through the arts. The Congress attracted capacity participation with 285 people attending from throughout the county. Attendees included twenty-eight school district teams comprising superintendents, teachers, school board members, parents, and students; teams included 34 individuals from the Pittsburgh Public Schools and 118 from Allegheny County. Other participants included artists and cultural organizations (58), the Congress Planning Committee (25), representatives from colleges and universities (14), professional associations and community organizations (14), and funders (15). (See Appendix for a list of attendees.)

How the Congress Came to Be

Heightened awareness both locally and nationally of the importance and value of arts education created momentum for the Congress. Recent national studies have demonstrated that arts learning has a substantial positive impact on student achievement in all subject areas. Regionally, however, arts education lacks coordination and the commitment to integrate the arts in broader education reform. Individual schools approach arts education with different degrees of commitment and resources. The result is that students receive unequal opportunity to study and engage in the arts. The region has a wealth of cultural organizations and artists working in and with schools.

Recognizing the need for a systematic approach to arts education involving the full range of stakeholders, the Heinz Endowments and The Grable Foundation initiated the idea for a regional Arts Education Congress, modeled after the successful Math/Science Congress held in 1994. A Sounding Board was created comprising twenty-five individuals representing schools, school districts, cultural institutions, colleges, and professional organizations concerned with arts education. This group was charged to identify the greatest obstacles to and opportunities for advancing arts education and to articulate a set of goals and strategic actions to support those goals.

Concurrently the school districts and Pittsburgh Public Schools were surveyed by Congress project coordinator Matt Dooley to look at how arts education is currently delivered to their students, and how principals and superintendents view their ability to do that effectively (see Appendix for a summary of survey results). This information, along

with the expertise and counsel of the Sounding Board shaped the agenda for the Arts Education Congress.

In addition to the Heinz Endowments and Grable Foundation, the Congress received funding from the Alcoa Foundation, Maurice Falk Medical Fund's Innovation and Development Fund, Frick Fund of the Buhl Foundation, The Hillman Company, Laurel Foundation, Mellon Bank Corporation, R.K. Mellon Family Foundation, Miles Inc. Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Charities, PPG Industries Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

Congress Overview

Janet Sarbaugh of the Heinz Endowments and Susan Brownlee of the Grable Foundation provided opening remarks. Sarbaugh described the challenge, citing arts education expert Dennie Palmer Wolf who likens the state of arts education to a "disassembled engine on the garage floor." The right components are all there, but the task of putting the pieces together is daunting. The Congress was a beginning point toward meeting this challenge.

The event opened with keynote speaker, Eric Booth (highlights below). The core of the Congress was a series of three deliberation sessions, in which participants:

1. considered specific regional arts education goals;
2. prioritized actions to support those goals; and
3. discussed an appropriate strategy to carry out these actions including where an entity dedicated to promoting arts education might be housed.

A special lunch program featured a demonstration lesson of a World Music Drumming curriculum by middle school students from the West Liberty Classical Academy, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and the Ingomar Middle School, North Allegheny School District, and their teachers Sarah Robertson and Pat Bauer. The curriculum was developed by Dr. Will Schmid to teach world music and cultural traditions while utilizing music education as a vehicle for teaching team building, respect, listening, problem solving, and other life skills. Eric Booth facilitated discussion with the lead teachers, drumming students, and Congress participants about the learning benefits of the drumming experience.

The day closed with a discussion of next steps and a drawing for three \$500 mini-grants. Grants were given for arts education related activities to: Sandra Mitchell, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Oronde Sharif, African Dance & Drum Ensemble, and Cornelia Davis, Artist Resource Program, University of Pittsburgh.

Post-Congress

The Congress identified leaders from among participants to serve on task forces that will move forward priority actions. A steering committee will also be formed to help establish a regional coordinating entity. The Heinz Endowments and Grable Foundation expressed a commitment of resources to help establish such a regional coordinating entity, including support for a staff person.

Fifty-eight percent of participants submitted written forms to indicate interest in future efforts; an impressive 109 individuals (38%) want to be actively involved. Among the seven actions discussed at the Congress, "professional development" had the strongest response (92 want active involvement; 27 to be kept informed). Other areas drawing keen interest were "ongoing public relations," and "advocacy for statewide standards;" all of these mirroring the top three priorities for action. The "clearinghouse for arts education" received comparable interest to advocacy on statewide standards for arts education. Stimulating college and university teacher training programs to include arts also received a notable response.

I. KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY ERIC BOOTH

Eric Booth, faculty and head of the arts education program at the Juilliard School, arts education consultant, and actor, presented the keynote address to an enthusiastic reception by Congress participants. Booth is recipient of the Broadway Theater Institute's highest honor, the Award of Excellence, for his contributions to arts education in America. Through stories and a participatory exercise, he exemplified how learning--a process of making personal connections to unfamiliar information and concepts--is enhanced through the use of the arts. Key points from his presentation follow.

Booth began by observing that, "We stand at an historic turning point regarding arts education." For the first time in twenty years, Booth sees hope for the future of arts education. Historically, there have been two reasons the arts have been taught in schools. The first is a belief in the arts for art's sake. Second, the arts have been taught for the sake of the workplace; in particular the manual arts were seen as having a role in preparing students for work in the trades and industry. Booth, however, believes an emergent third reason--*art for the sake of learning*--will become the dominant one in education. "There is something about the arts that awakens learning in a way nothing else does." In this respect, he described those in the arts as being in the "yearning business." The arts stimulate individual yearning that can then be productively channeled. Booth reinforced his call to seize this opportunity with three observations:

First, society in general and educators in particular experience increasing pressure to demonstrate bottom line results in student learning through standards and testing. At the same time, "every good educator knows that something is lacking in the learning agenda" when education is driven by such bottom line objectives. Although the artistic experience can seem contradictory to empirical results, the arts are assurance that learning stays alive.

Second, emerging research demonstrating the relationship between the arts and learning is bolstering the case for arts education and building public awareness. Parents are beginning to pay attention to publicized research results; many seeking assurances from schools that arts curriculum is offered to meet learning goals. Booth does not believe that the definitive "Holy Grail" research has yet been done, but enough has been scientifically studied to provide a strong circumstantial case that the study of the arts helps students learn how to be better learners.

Finally, Booth urged that we not lose sight of the fact that achievement in the arts is worthy in and of itself. Booth noted that while evidence exists that the arts have many side benefits, no other subject is forced to justify its worth in relation to other subjects. He cautioned that the value of the arts in and of themselves as a discipline for study not be underplayed in the current environment.

With positive forces converging in favor of arts education, the opportunity to advance arts education in schools is at hand. In order to effectively seize this opportunity, Booth identified five ways that advocates of arts education must change their approach.

1. ***Partnerships are essential.*** Doing it alone, no matter how well you do it, is not enough. In order for arts education to take hold and for efforts to achieve their full potential, art specialists and classroom teachers have to work together; cultural organizations and artists must find effective collaborations, etc.

2. ***We have to get better at what we do.*** “The arts cannot continue to be that occasional attractive moment which then disappears. It is not acceptable that there are mediocre and weak art specialists in schools, or that they are using worn out curricula, and seeing hundreds of students every week. Artists must do more than waltz into a classroom, create a little magic and leave. They must know about developmental issues of learners so they can precisely target their activities . . . and connect them to other serious learning that is happening in the lives of those students. Administrators cannot let arts experiences float around on the periphery of school life; they must bring the arts and classroom faculty together to talk and plan; they must back up their words of support for the arts with actions that bring the arts into the heart of the school. Cultural institutions must learn more about how schools run, about how their programs can serve school needs, about ways to prepare their artists to succeed more deeply in classrooms. And they must find new ways to offer the resources of their institutions to students. Parents must understand that learning in the arts is more than an annual play or concert; they must be invited into the process of arts in education. And the community, like parents, must be engaged in the process, not only the results, of student art work. There is plenty of work for us all to do. And we don’t know exactly how to do it, but we do know the status quo is not good enough, and every one of us has work to do--joyful work.”

3. ***Develop new answers to the productive relationship between art and curriculum.*** Educators typically make relationships between the arts and other curriculum in areas of content and theme with different degrees of effect. Content, for example, may not always be particularly interesting to the learner while the exploration of a common theme between curriculum and a work of art may be exciting. Extending beyond conventional approaches to bridge art and other curriculum is essential to meet different learners and different educational goals effectively.

4. ***Get serious about assessment.*** While quantitative data may be one outcome of assessment, an additional important outcome is *understanding* the benefits of assessment and knowing how to turn data into compelling evidence of impact on students. Booth characterized a sequence of phases through which education systems come to internalize and institutionalize assessment. They typically start in denial of the merits of assessment, move to resistance, develop a naive optimism, experience despair about what it takes to do it, exercise diligence and get through it, and then refine the process, simplifying it to work. Ultimately, those who move through this process achieve a kind of research attitude in which the work of assessment is embedded in learning activities from beginning to end.

5. **Re-examine approaches to advocacy.** Approaches to advocacy are mostly outmoded and anecdotal. In addressing leaders in education, government, and other spheres whose decision-making has bearing on arts education, we need to hone arguments about art for the sake of learning.

In closing, Booth quoted from his book, *The Everyday Work of Art* to remind that these pragmatic necessities should not obscure the essential and unique role that art plays in the inner lives of human beings.

We are shaped by what we extend ourselves into; our attending and our participation inform our lives. We must be very careful with the objects and actions we present to ourselves and to our children because we are changed by them. The work of art lends shape to passion and to yearning. Works of art are the best containers for yearning because they are so rich, so human, so satisfying on so many levels. Art work gives serious outer shape to serious inner yearning. If our yearnings are informed by less rich objects, they will go to sleep, will die, or will eventually distort themselves in the harmful expressions that fill the pages of the daily newspaper.

II. LOCAL IMPLICATIONS OF GOALS

In the first deliberation session, Congress participants discussed in mixed stakeholder groups eight goals to advance arts education in Allegheny County proposed by the Arts Education Sounding Board. In particular, participants discussed the implications of each goal in terms of their local arts education situation and advantages and obstacles to achieving each.

A. Affirmation of Goals

Participants found local as well as regional advantages inherent in each of the eight goals.

GOAL A - To incorporate goals, strategies, incentives, and assessment to improve education in the arts within district-wide and school-based strategic plans. Buy-in from the top down through inclusion of arts education in school-based and district plans was viewed as the only way to ensure official commitment to integration of the arts in education goals as well as budgets. Planning for arts education would help ensure consistency across a district. The planning process was also viewed as a way to increase the number and commitment of stakeholders.

GOAL B - To support the essential role of arts specialists in implementing standards-based arts education. A commitment to standards-based arts education was seen as synonymous with a commitment to supporting arts specialists. Through the expertise of arts specialists, a child's potential and learning in the arts is maximized. Participants interpreted support to mean that greater respect, resources, time, and cooperation need to be given to arts specialists.

GOAL C - *To maximize use of regional cultural assets within schools' arts education programs.* Participants strongly believe the region's cultural assets add value to both arts education and arts infusion oriented programs and encourage lifelong learning in the arts. Involvement of artists and cultural organizations expands and enriches curriculum by exposing students to working artists, career options, and a wide variety of arts experience right in their own backyard--the "power of real world experience." Partnerships between schools and cultural organizations/artists are seen to enhance community relations and funding possibilities for both.

GOAL D - *To assist all teachers, through in-service training, to effectively incorporate the arts in education.* There are plenty of teachers who want to incorporate the arts, but are unsure as to how. The primary advantage cited is that in-service training can increase teacher skill and repertoire, and therefore confidence in incorporating the arts in their classrooms. Training can begin to develop a peer system for ongoing exchange and support. In-service training can help break down barriers between arts specialists and classroom teachers to promote more teamwork.

GOAL E - *To enhance the capacity of arts specialists to contribute to standards-based interdisciplinary curriculum development and implementation.* Participants mainly saw this goal as giving arts specialists a rightful place as part of the core educational team, removing them from isolation and reaping the benefits of their expertise to enhance curriculum. Some noted that greater involvement of arts specialists might help meet increasing demand for interdisciplinary curriculum by parents and classroom teachers.

GOAL F - *To secure a place for sequential, standards-based arts education as a core academic subject in the education of all students K-12.* This goal was viewed to give arts education priority and validation in its own right as an essential part of a holistic education, ultimately leading to more well rounded students. It was felt that a mandate for arts education would allow energy to be more productively focused on student learning than on debating the issue and "quiet doubters long enough to show them results and prove them wrong."

GOAL G - *To ensure the establishment and adoption of standards for arts education in Pennsylvania and methods of accountability to uphold standards.* The arts education field can further make the case for the value of arts education by supporting the development of high quality standards and assessment. The institution of standards would encourage leaders to take quality arts education more seriously and would help to promote greater consistency and continuity in the quality and delivery of arts education.

GOAL H - *To prepare all future teachers, through pre-service training, to effectively incorporate the arts in education.* Some participants believe that by training future teachers systemic change will evolve. The outcomes of this goal could be more creative teachers with a broader outlook, improved curriculum; generally, a quality teacher base which ensures vitality in education and arts education.

B. Obstacles to Achieving Goals

Lack of money and time as well as counterproductive attitudes recurred as common obstacles to achieving many of the goals. Following are some of the key discussion points in these and other areas.

Difficulty unlocking negative attitudes and resistance to changing the status quo were cited as core attitudinal problems. Most fundamentally, the arts continue to fight an uphill battle to be considered worthwhile on their own merits and in achieving other curriculum goals. This was cited as an issue at every level. When faced with tough choices, school boards, superintendents, parents, and principals are pressured by back-to-basics education reform and are seen to lack conviction in finding resources to advance arts education. Many classroom teachers are uninformed or less than enthusiastic about integration of arts in their curriculum.

Finally, because administrators and school boards may view investments in arts education as higher risk than “the basics,” some participants believe that more pilot program opportunities are needed to test ideas and demonstrate possibilities while also allowing for failure on a smaller scale.

Differing philosophies about approaches and an inability to achieve shared vision can create obstacles. While participants engaged in the task to evaluate each goal independently of the others, some held strong views about the relative merits of sequential, standards-based arts education and arts infusion approaches. It was noted that advocates for either approach can set up a situation counterproductive to advancing one or the other. Some participants felt that evolving and articulating a clear position in relation to arts education and arts infusion would establish a needed conceptual framework and make it easier to determine priorities for action.

Time is a crucial resource but the lack of it poses a huge hurdle. Student time is currently limited by the structure and length of the school day, which prohibits adding art as another core subject. Teachers already feel pressured to maximize limited time in their discipline subjects and are reluctant to relinquish time for planning interdisciplinary curriculum. Arts specialists are overextended, some seeing hundreds of students a day in multiple schools. Superintendents and principals, too, expressed the challenges of finding adequate time for planning, fundraising, and coordinating efforts suggested by many of the goals.

Lack of funds seriously restricts arts education progress. This was the most frequently cited reason for not hiring arts specialists and a limiting factor in providing in-service training, enabling release time for teacher planning, and developing and implementing arts infusion programs. Inequitable funding across districts and schools was described as a problem in advancing arts education throughout Allegheny County. Some believe that only state-mandated change in requirements for arts education will increase local resources and reduce inequities which now exist. Others expressed, however, that local school boards, parents, and administration could affect budget changes if they were truly committed to advancing arts education.

Territoriality among classroom teachers and arts specialists is an impediment to interdisciplinary curriculum development. Many classroom teachers are protective of their own discipline/curriculum and the classroom time needed to meet their primary

education goals. This can preclude interdisciplinary curriculum development with art specialists, artists, or cultural organizations. Some arts specialists fear eventual loss of their jobs if classroom teachers increasingly integrate the arts in classroom curriculum. Territorial issues emerge as well in the district and school budgeting process as arts and other competing interests vie for funds. Lack of quality programs that integrate the arts as part of teacher training impedes the development of strong interdisciplinary initiatives.

Establishment of well conceived state standards and assessment tools for arts education needs to be informed by arts education professionals. Congress participants expressed concern that the process to date has lacked adequate involvement of arts education professionals. Participants stressed the need for teacher and art specialist input, including dance and drama, in the articulation of standards and the development of assessment methodologies. Participants also stressed that having standards and assessment does not necessarily reflect what is actually taught.

Structural and philosophical obstacles prevent colleges and universities from training future teachers to incorporate arts in education. To improve programs in order to better equip future teachers would require development of methodologies oriented toward practical applications of the arts and which include experienced teachers teaching pre-service courses. In general, participants described a necessary change in mindset within college and university teacher training programs which many observe to be “behind the times,” “out of touch,” “isolated,” and lacking a buy-in that the arts are a fundamentally valuable element of education. There is also a need for incentives which will encourage students. Current curriculum requirements already consume students’ schedules.

Difficulty finding resources has been an obstacle for schools wanting to link with local artists and cultural organizations and other resources. Many participants said they did not know the extent of regional cultural resources that could be tapped nor how to locate them. Participants also cited difficulty identifying high quality in-service professional development, explaining that current approaches to in-service are often inadequate.

III. PRIORITIES FOR JOINT ACTIONS

A primary objective of the Congress was to create a joint action agenda to advance arts education in the region. In stakeholder groups, participants discussed and ranked their top three choices among seven actions proposed by the Arts Education Sounding Board and Congress Planning Committee. Groups often saw linkages between related actions and grouped related actions together. Results were tallied by stakeholder groups and for the Congress as a whole.

A. Top Ranked Actions by the Congress

The Congress as a whole identified the following as the top three priorities for joint action:

Action 2. - Establish coordinated professional development for teachers, arts specialists, administrators, and cultural organizations and artists.

Action 5. - Accelerate education and advocacy efforts to the State Board of Education and other stakeholders regarding the value of sequential, standards-based arts education and the development of state standards for arts education.

Action 4. - Implement ongoing public relations to give public visibility to arts education policy, activities, issues, and impact.

These three actions received significantly higher points than the other four actions (see Diagrams A and B).

Diagram A - Action Priorities by Stakeholder Groups

	Action 1 TA for Planning	Action 2 Prof. Develop- ment	Action 3 Clearing- house	Action 4 Public Relations	Action 5 Standards	Action 6 Assess- ment	Action 7 Pre-service Teacher Training
teachers	4	17	3	15	19*	1	1
arts	3	18*	5	5	4	0	1
supers	1	6*	2	2	1	0	0
principal	4	7*	2	0	2	0	3
school bd.	0	3*	1	0	2	0	0
parents	0	1	0	2	3*	0	0
funders	1	0	3*	2	0	0	0
univ/prof	0	5*	1	5*	3	3	4
students	0	0	3*	2	1	0	0
Total	13	57	20	33	35	4	9

At tables organized by stakeholder type, participants individually ranked their top three choices among the seven actions proposed and then discussed the actions with fellow stakeholders at their tables. Then table members (through consensus or voting) ranked the table's top three choices. For each action, the total number of table votes were tallied by stakeholder type. Then, a multiplier factor was assigned to give appropriate weighting to the first, second, and third ranked choices. The resulting "quality points" for each action are represented in the figures below. Asterisk represents first ranked choice for each stakeholder group.

Diagram B - Top Three Priority Actions at a Glance

	Action 1 TA for Planning	Action 2 Prof. Develop- ment	Action 3 Clearing- house	Action 4 Public Relations	Action 5 Standards	Action 6 Assess- ment	Action 7 Pre-service Teacher Training
teachers		2nd		3rd	1st		
arts		1st	2nd	2nd	3rd		
supers	3rd	1st	2nd	2nd	3rd		
principal	2nd	1st	3rd		3rd		3rd
school bd.		1st	3rd		2nd		
parents		3rd		2nd	1st		
funders	3rd		1st	2nd			
univ/prof		1st		1st	3rd	3rd	2nd
students			1st	2nd	3rd		

This chart shows 1st, 2nd, and 3rd ranked actions for each stakeholder group based on the quality points indicated in Diagram A. Some actions were tied.

Number one ranked

Action 2. - Establish coordinated professional development for teachers, arts specialists, administrators, and cultural organizations and artists.

Professional development was by far the highest priority. It was top ranked among superintendents, principals, school boards, artists and cultural organizations, and university, community, and professional groups, and ranked second among teachers and curriculum specialists. Many linked Action 7 (to stimulate college and university teacher training programs to address arts in education within the curriculum) to professional development and urged that they be considered as a single, multi-faceted action.

Although stakeholders often viewed professional development in different ways, overwhelming support reflects that many feel ill equipped to effectively utilize the arts in the classroom, (a discussion point in the earlier session about goals as well). Teachers stressed that professional development should be tailored to the needs of the individual practitioner, not offered as generic presentations. They also advocated for interdisciplinary professional development that can inform teachers about the goals and issues of different disciplines and provide a starting point for the development of interdisciplinary units. Artists and cultural organizations underscored the importance of professional development, not only for teachers but also for various stakeholders. They see it as a means by which they can learn the language and concerns of the world of education. Congress evaluations further emphasized the need and also suggest better professional development opportunities.

Number two ranked

Action 5. - Accelerate education and advocacy efforts to the State Board of Education and other stakeholders regarding the value of sequential, standards-based arts education and the development of state standards for arts education.

The development of state standards was the highest priority for teachers and parents and ranked second among school board members' priorities. Teacher perspective factored significantly in the total Congress ranking due to their proportionately large numbers and strong feeling about the issue. Teachers' discussions also emphasized the need for discipline-specific standards for dance and theater, as well as music and visual arts.

Despite its high ranking, state standards proved to be a highly debated topic in many small group discussions. Some view standards as already in progress and inevitable and therefore did not rank this action. Others, particularly teachers, who have seen the draft standards, are very concerned with the language incorporated in the current draft, fueling their desire to have a role. Many participants view development of statewide standards as a priority first step because their establishment would greatly assist arts educators in promoting the importance of instruction in and through the arts, and encourage schools to take arts education more seriously. Most recognized the reality that, because the establishment of statewide standards is an effort with a life of its own, Allegheny County stakeholders' action will require a strategic approach to have an adequately strong voice toward the best possible conclusion. Participants felt that arts education advocates in Allegheny County can play an important role in several aspects of the development of standards, including: (1) the development of high quality standards; (2) the development of mechanisms to connect standards between and among disciplines; and (3) the development of assessment mechanisms.

Number Three Ranked

Action 4. - Implement ongoing public relations to give public visibility to arts education policy, activities, issues, and impact.

Ongoing public relations was ranked as the top priority by university and community professionals. It ranked second among parents, funders, students and tied for second among superintendents and artists and cultural organizations along side the establishment of a clearinghouse. Teachers and curriculum specialists ranked it third. Superintendents believe that public relations need to be focused internally within school districts as well as externally on a county and statewide basis.

Public relations appear to have emerged as a key response to the need to educate and change misperceptions. The previous Congress discussion about goals elicited common concern about the pervasive lack of awareness, understanding, and counterproductive attitudes, which pose obstacles to advancing arts education. In participant evaluations of the Congress, they frequently recommended increased print and electronic media coverage and awareness building campaigns.

B. Discussion of Other Actions

Action 3. Establish a clearinghouse to meet the information, resource, and networking needs of teachers, arts specialists, administrators, and cultural organizations and artists.

Although not among the top three priorities, the idea of a clearinghouse did receive notable discussion and support by certain stakeholder groups. It ranked first among funders and students, second among superintendents and artists/ cultural organizations, and third among school board members. Many participants see that all actions could be enhanced by a clearinghouse and that a clearinghouse should be an active resource rather than passive archive. Teachers and others called for technology to be used to facilitate information exchange and updating through a clearinghouse. In evaluation forms, arts specialists, classroom teachers, and cultural organizations expressed the need for a directory listing cultural organizations, art teachers, artists, model programs, and other resources that would facilitate their work.

Action 1. Provide technical assistance to districts and schools to develop plans to improve arts education.

Action 1 was ranked second by principals and third by funders. Facilitators noted that the wording of Action 1 misled some participants to focus more on the idea of technical assistance than on the development of district and school plans for arts education. Artists and cultural organizations wanted to find themselves reflected in school and district plans but felt the language of this action and rationale focused exclusively on schools. Teachers and Superintendents discussed the importance of planning in their groups.

Action 6. Develop a cost-effective, regional approach to arts assessment based on state standards.

A regional approach to assessment received the lowest points and limited discussion. It was, however, ranked third by university and community groups. In discussion, some linked assessment to the development of standards or saw it as a much later activity after other things were in place, and therefore gave it a lower priority.

Action 7. Stimulate college and university teacher training programs to address arts in education within the curriculum.

Although university and community groups ranked this second and principals third, stakeholders did not include Action 7 among top priorities. In discussion, most held the belief that teacher training programs addressing arts in education should be linked with professional development (Action 2).

C. General Observations

The two largest stakeholder groups expressed unique concerns. Artists and cultural organizations sometimes had difficulty identifying their place within the proposed actions.

This was, in part, attributed to less familiarity with the arts education field and terminology but also to a concern that the cultural sector's place was not clearly outlined for the Congress. Teachers felt that certain goals and actions were weighted toward arts infusion rather than sequential, arts discipline-based arts education. Arts specialists were concerned that this could lead to the perception of a diminished need for their expertise.

Facilitators noted that teachers' choice of priorities seemed often to come back to what motivates teacher behavior: attitudes of other teachers, principals, curriculum specialists; incentives; standards; negative feedback on individual actions; and access to resources, expertise, and materials. Teachers focused more readily on their local, immediate context rather than regional joint action.

IV. APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATION OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

A regional arts education coordinating entity will need to be created to represent various stakeholder perspectives in future decision making. Success in pursuing a joint action agenda will depend on the willingness of various stakeholders to abide by decisions made on behalf of their professional interests and the region. In large stakeholder groups, Congress participants discussed if they should be represented in future decision making about arts education in the region and what organization(s) could best represent their interests.

All stakeholders want to have a role in future decision-making. Although several did not consider existing professional or service organizations to be the best ones to represent their interests, they did feel that these organizations should be part of future efforts.

The deliberative and inclusive nature of the Congress set up a high expectation for future participation. Certain stakeholder groups were reluctant to define a much more limited representation of their interests as is discussed below. Further, Congress evaluations encouraged that the future decision making body, as well as broader convenings, be conscious and diligent to ensure cultural diversity.

A. Artists and Cultural Groups

Participants recognized the vast diversity within the cultural community in terms of artistic discipline, organization size and purpose, experience in arts education, etc. and stressed that such diversity should be represented in future decision making. Multiple representatives should include artists, the programmatic perspectives of education directors, and the influence and decision-making authority of board or executive director leadership within a range of cultural organizations.

Artists and cultural groups were uncertain that any one organization within the cultural sector could effectively represent their diverse interests. Participants recognized in discussions and reiterated in Congress evaluations that a lack of familiarity with each other and limited past opportunities to convene about arts education contributed to their difficulty in identifying appropriate representation. "There is a lot of work to be done in the area of communication; arts organizations need to know each other and collaborate

more.” They expressed a need to develop criteria to select cultural sector representatives.

B. Superintendents

Depending on the size of the regional steering entity, superintendents agreed that a representative group comprising one representative from each of the four Allegheny County regions (North, South, East, West) plus two from the City of Pittsburgh would effectively represent their interests. Superintendents want to be personally involved and believe they should be based on the power and authority of their office, but this would not preclude participation by assistant superintendents or other qualified administrators.

C. Teachers and Curriculum Specialists

Teachers did not feel that any existing group could adequately represent their interests. Moreover, they want to ensure that all teachers have opportunity to participate in discussions. They would like to see two teachers from each district (collectively reflecting the range of arts specialists and classroom teachers, primary and secondary levels, small, medium and large schools, etc.) represented in broad planning and decision making discussions. From this group, representatives to a Steering Committee could be selected.

D. Principals, School Board Members, Parents

While several associations exist which represent principals, none were considered appropriate to represent them in advancing arts education. Further, the principals at the Congress were highly motivated to participate in future deliberations themselves. They advocated for regional representation of principals and felt that existing regional groups such as the Mon Valley Education Consortium may provide vehicles from which to choose representatives throughout the region.

In Congress evaluations, several stakeholder types emphasized the importance of involving more parents as advocates and building their stakeholder representation in future deliberations and actions.

E. Universities, Community Organizations, and Professional Organizations

Among the participants in this grouping were college and university educators, teachers and administrators affiliated with the Mon Valley Consortium, and local, regional, and state agencies including: Eastern Region NAEA, PA Dept. of Education/Division of Arts and Humanities, Penn. Arts Standards Committee, Pittsburgh Council on Public Education, PA Alliance for Arts Education, State Association of Health and Physical Education/Recreation and Dance, and the PA Council on the Arts.

The range of participants in this group did not reflect a coalesced stakeholder group in the same sense as others at the Congress. The key point from this discussion was that professional associations, consortia, and state agencies did not feel they needed to be represented on a steering committee, but that they should be involved appropriately as partners in specific program, advocacy, and communication efforts.

F. Students

The two students attending the Congress believed that the student voice should be represented in decision making to ensure that a practical view is not lost about how arts education works in schools with students. They had doubts, however, whether anyone would listen. They felt there should be one representative from a small, mid-sized, and large high school, with balance in rural, suburban, and urban locations. They suggested dividing the county into three sections and rotating student representation from year to year. Teachers could nominate students.

G. Funders

Sensitive to their influence as funders, these funders initially did not see themselves having a decision-making role. However, they came to believe that they could participate as stakeholders because they have an interest in arts education goals as well as district and field-wide knowledge that could be valuable.

Funders would select a member of the existing Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania and a member of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts to represent them in future deliberations.

H. Other Prospective Stakeholders

Participants identified the following additional stakeholder types to include in future efforts:

- Arts related unions (e.g. Actors Equity, American Guild of Musical Artists, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, American Guild of Variety Artists, Screen Actors Guild)
- Corporate leaders;
- City and county government leaders;
- Media;
- Community outreach of various media organizations;
- Literacy programs; and
- Increased participation from parents and students.

V. WHERE TO LOCATE COORDINATION OF REGIONAL JOINT ACTIONS

To move forward with joint actions, a regional entity will need to be established to coordinate stakeholder participation and facilitate the implementation of priority efforts. It was suggested that such an entity would benefit from being housed within another organization/institution for the first few start-up years. The home institution should have a regional base or reach. In mixed stakeholder groups, Congress participants considered the pros and cons of locating a regional arts education coordinating entity within an organization based in the cultural, K-12 education, or college/university sector, or suggested other options. They also discussed particular sites and organizations.

There was no clear commonly held sentiment about the particular sectors proposed as host locations; table votes for first choice location were cultural sector (13); K-12 education sector (9); college/university (6); and other (4). The lack of a clear choice suggested to many that an independent entity be strongly considered. Facilitators reported vigorous debate reflecting concerns as well as assumptions and misperceptions about the various sectors and particular organizations. Participants were not necessarily familiar enough with sectors other than their own to effectively consider options. They also assumed that the regional coordinating entity would implement all actions; this was not necessarily the intent of the Sounding Board. Rather, it might facilitate the efforts of existing education, cultural, and other organizations, in addition to providing some central coordination. Some found it difficult to identify locations without yet knowing which actions would become a priority focus.

Facilitators commented that participants may have needed more preparation to productively discuss this subject. Better understanding of the Sounding Board's thinking which led to the idea of a start-up location within another institution might have helped. Therefore, first choice locations should be considered in light of these factors.

A. Criteria to Identify and Select a Host Organization

Despite the difficulties inherent in this session, discussions yielded useful criteria for determining a base for a regional coordinating entity:

- Credibility and compatibility of goals in the eyes of both the education and cultural sectors;
- Neutrality, neither exerting its own institutional agenda nor biased toward particular stakeholder interests;
- Respect for maintaining the regional coordinating entity's own distinct identity and decision making power;
- Provision of useful connections, resources, knowledge, expertise to advance arts education goals;
- Infrastructure support with minimal bureaucracy imposed and reasonable overhead costs;
- Capacity for regional reach and operation; and
- Accessibility of location, either centrally located or mobile.

B. Key Concerns

Key concerns raised in discussions were:

The coordinating entity needs to have the ability to be neutral. Turf issues pervaded nearly all discussions and many participants advocated that the entity be independent. When pressed to discuss the best location, cultural organizations voted for housing the entity in cultural organizations and educators within an educational setting. Yet, participants were largely unable to identify particular organizations which they strongly believed would be a suitable home. Many gravitated to discussion of specific locations or buildings such as the Alcoa Building or a corporate headquarters in the absence of strong organizational options or because they felt these presented more neutral options.

The ability for the regional coordinating entity to maintain its own identity and decision making was a paramount concern if housed at another institution.

Participants were concerned that the host institution's agenda could become a driving factor. Greater clarity around the distinction between being housed at versus being a program of another organization might have allayed some of these fears. Facilitators noted that, in participants' concern for independence, they lost sight of the contributions and benefits that a host institution might make to advancing arts education.

C. Specific Locations Cited

The most frequently cited specific locations and related comments included:

- Within the cultural sector, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, and the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts were mentioned most frequently. In general, cultural organizations are perceived as having credibility with the public, central locations, compatible goals, and offer an environment featuring the arts. Cultural organizations, however, were described as not necessarily in touch with the interests of schools, often focus on only one discipline, and may be viewed as too one-dimensional for this charge.
- Within the K-12 education sector, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit was mentioned most frequently but with both positive and negative comments; the High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, Pittsburgh Public Schools, was also named. There was greatest assurance that teachers' interests would be represented if located in the education sector. Participants conveyed that it would be difficult to locate the entity in one district over another. In addition, education systems were described as often inflexible, politicized, and potentially exerting excessive control and bureaucracy.
- Within colleges and universities, several institutions were named as prospects: Carnegie Mellon University, Carlow, Duquesne, Chatham, and Community College of Allegheny County, Main Campus. It was noted that higher education institutions can contribute research capabilities, space, interns, and are well suited if priority actions center around pre- and in-service teacher training. Colleges and universities were negatively cited for being isolated from the real world, possibly exerting too much influence on policy, and charging high overheads. Competition among universities may preclude participation by some if the entity is housed in one particular institution.
- Within the "Other" category, the idea of an independent entity was most often named. Housing the entity within a library or corporation was specifically cited, as well as within the Heinz, Grable, or Buhl Foundations. The concept of a mobile office or satellite offices was mentioned.

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS OF THE CONGRESS

A total of 167 of the 285 attendees (58%) completed evaluation forms. Responses to evaluation questions are summarized in the attached Tables. For the purpose of reporting, school board, parent, funder, corporation/community representatives, and "other" stakeholder groups were grouped together in a "miscellaneous" category, because three or fewer individuals submitted forms from each of these groups.

The volume of written commentary as well as the emotion with which comments were offered gave evidence of the seriousness with which people participated in the Congress. *Overall impressions of the day were resoundingly positive.* “Outstanding,” “remarkable,” and “excellent” were frequently used to describe the day; one college representative called it a “landmark” event. Participants were very impressed by the organization of the day; they recognized that the care with which the Congress was designed and executed enabled progress on a huge task. Some commented that the task may have been too large for the time available and that the expectation for consensus in small group discussions was unrealistic given time and participants’ lack of familiarity with each other.

The diversity of stakeholders represented and the deliberative, participatory design of the day were highly appreciated. Participants valued the opportunity to hear other stakeholder perspectives and to have the opportunity to be heard beyond their own peer group. One arts specialist wrote, “[This is] one of the few times in my professional career that I felt my opinion counted as a professional.” Both college/university and cultural organizations/artist stakeholders made a call to ensure cultural diversity in both broad discussions and within the leadership that moves forward joint actions in the future.

A. Expectations Regarding Impact of Congress on Arts Education

Participants across all stakeholder groups expect that the Congress will lead to impact in advancing arts education. In describing expected impact at the regional, school district, and school/organization levels, a combined 85% to 98% of participants had “high” or “moderately high” expectations that the Congress will have an impact. More specifically:

- *Expectations for impact were higher at the regional and school/ organization levels than at the school district level.* In terms of *impact on the Allegheny County region*, 56% of respondents have “high” expectations and 42% “moderately high” expectations. Similarly, in terms of *impact on individual schools or organizations*, 54% reported “high” and 40% reported “moderately high” expectations. *Expectations for impact on school districts were more moderate (50%) than high (35%).*
- *Superintendents, principals, and administrators had the highest expectations for change based on the day*, including “high” expectations (61%) for district level change, whereas other stakeholders were more moderately optimistic of district impact. Other stakeholders indicating “high” expectations were classroom teachers, those grouped in the miscellaneous category (school board, parent, funder, corporation/community representatives, and “other”), artists, and art specialists.

B. Effectiveness of the Congress in Setting a Joint Action Agenda

A combined 88% of participants viewed the day as “highly effective” (39%) or “effective” (49%) in formulating a strategic joint action agenda to advance arts education in the county. This corroborates the significant degree of agreement found across stakeholders in their top three choices for joint action.

C. Effectiveness of the Congress in Determining Best Options for a Governing Structure

Opinions were more varied regarding the Congress' effectiveness in determining the best option(s) for a governing structure. Nearly half the participants (47%) rated the Congress "effective;" 25% rated it "highly effective." Twenty-four percent (24%), largely cultural organizations and artists, indicated it was only "somewhat effective." These results also corroborate the diverging opinions reported in small group discussions and the sentiment that an independent regional coordinating entity may be the best option.

Finally, regarding future efforts, many saw the Congress as a momentous beginning and urged that the momentum of the day not be lost. One cultural organization representative saw the convening as a "ripe moment." Another school administrator wrote, "It is critical to have quick and visible results come from this, otherwise the energy and interest will fade quickly." A significant number of requests were made for additional convenings and even an annual arts education Congress. Many, particularly teachers and the cultural sector, saw value in meeting within their own stakeholder groups as well as across professions and interests.

In and of itself, the Congress was an enlightening day. One artist expressed, "Thanks so much for having this and inviting me. It gave me a great opportunity to see the other art people, hear their voices and opinions, and raise my own. As an artist, student, advocate, and educator in the arts, this was a dream." But participants also recognized their responsibility to exercise leadership and take action. As one principal wrote, "The real evaluation is in what we do, not in what we plan or hope."

ARTS EDUCATION CONGRESS

Tabulation of Congress Evaluations

(Note: Figures do not include responses left blank by participants.)

1. Based on the outcomes of the day, what is your expectation regarding the potential impact the Congress will have on advancing arts education:

1a. Expectations for impact in Allegheny County as a region

	total	high #	%	moderate #	%	low #	%
art specialists	53	25	47%	26	49%	1	1
classroom teachers	16	11	69%	5	31%	-	-
cultural organizations	39	16	41%	22	56%	-	-
artists	7	4	57%	3	43%	-	-
super/admin/principals	31	25	81%	6	19%	-	-
college/university	11	4	36%	6	54%	-	-
miscellaneous	10	8	80%	2	20%	-	-
TOTAL	167	93	56%	70	42%	1	1%

1b. Expectations for impact in your local school district

	total	high #	%	moderate #	%	low #	%
art specialists	53	20	38%	29	55%	2	3%
classroom teachers	16	5	31%	10	62%	1	6%
cultural organizations	39	9	23%	20	51%	1	2%
artists	7	1	14%	5	71%	1	14%
super/admin/principals	31	19	61%	12	39%	-	-
college/university	11	2	18%	5	45%	-	-
miscellaneous	10	3	30%	3	30%	-	-
TOTAL	167	59	35%	84	50%	5	3%

1c. Expectations for impact in your school or organization?

	total	high #	%	moderate #	%	low #	%
art specialists	53	30	57%	20	38%	2	3%
classroom teachers	16	7	44%	9	56%	-	-
cultural organizations	39	17	43%	19	49%	-	-
artists	7	4	57%	3	43%	-	-
super/admin/principals	31	22	71%	8	26%	-	-
college/university	11	5	45%	5	45%	-	-
miscellaneous	10	6	60%	3	30%	-	-
TOTAL	167	91	54%	67	40%	2	1%

2. Given the two objectives of the day, how would you rate the effectiveness of the overall format and process of the Congress?

2a. In formulating a strategic joint action agenda to advance arts education in Allegheny County

	total	highly effective #	%	effective #	%	somewhat effective #	%
art specialists	53	25	47%	25	47%	2	3%
classroom teachers	16	7	43%	7	44%	2	12%
cultural organizations	39	7	18%	20	51%	12	30%
artists	7	2	28%	4	57%	1	14%
super/admin/principals	31	18	58%	13	42%	-	-
college/university	11	3	27%	7	64%	1	9%
miscellaneous	10	4	40%	6	60%		
TOTAL	167	66	39%	82	49%	18	11%

Note: There were zero responses in the “ineffective” category.

2b. In determining best options for a governing structure to advance arts education

	total	highly effective #	%	effective #	%	somewhat effective #	%
art specialists	53	16	30%	30	57%	5	9%
classroom teachers	16	6	37%	5	31%	4	25%
cultural organizations	39	1	2%	15	38%	22	56%
artists	7	1	4%	3	43%	3	43%
super/admin/principals	31	12	39%	16	52%	3	10%
college/university	11	2	18%	5	45%	3	27%
miscellaneous	10	4	40%	5	50%	1	10%
TOTAL	167	42	25%	79	47%	41	24%

Note: There were 4 responses (2%) in the “ineffective” category.